Location 1 - Henry Telecom – 12th and South Street, Philadelphia

Notes:
- Mostly a cell phone repair shop, but they also sell a small selection of used phones which I photographed above
- The woman that I talked to said that all of the phones were unlocked, which means that they can be used with all carriers and sold overseas
- Phones ranged from $50 and up
- I couldn’t extract a lot of information from the woman working. She was very tight lipped and actually asked me to leave after I asked a few too many questions
Locations 2 – Gadget Fix 9th and South Street, Philadelphia

Notes:
- Spoke to one of the young guys working at the front desk
- Phones are priced based on eBay and on the local competition (he noted CEX which is located on 4th and South as their main competitor. He pulled up their website so that I could get a feel for the variety of phones that they offer, and also indicated that they are huge with over 400 stores worldwide)
- He sees a range of consumers, from students who have lost their phones in cabs to lawyers, doctors, section 8, etc. He noted that the demand for these used phones is not an age thing, it’s more of a budget consideration
- iPhone is the most popular phone that they sell
- They acquire phones by people dropping them off in exchange for cash, but also noted that there is probably someone ordering online and bringing inventory to the storefront
- He also noted that Sprint and AT&T almost partner with this second hand store in particular by sending customers to them
- As I was leaving, he told me that I would have difficulty finding people to talk to about the second hand cell phone market. He said that while he knew that I wasn’t a cop (because he knows who the local cops are), other people would be worried about me asking questions.
Location 3 – New Century Wireless 7th and South, Philadelphia

Notes:
- Phones range from $30-$400
- Phone varieties include the latest iPhone version and popular brands such as Samsung
- Prices are determined by looking at eBay
- The man that I spoke to indicated that he also sees a range of customers, and didn’t point to one characteristic over another to define his customer base
- I asked him if people drop off their phones and that is how he acquires them, and he said no. However, when I asked again how he acquired his cell phones, he said that people drop them off. There may have been a language barrier, but he also seemed pretty tight lipped and concerned about my questions.
- One man came in while I was there to pay for his services, but other than that it was quiet.
Location 4 – Tech$mart 5th and South, Philadelphia
Notes:
- Pretty large selection of used phones, with more coming
- I talked to an employee who was very cautious and didn’t answer most of my questions citing that they have only been open for 4 weeks and haven’t received a lot of foot traffic due to a lack of a sign.
- He said that people generally come in because they have damages to their current phone (ex. A cracked screen) and the cost to repair would be too much. He also said that people do not want to be locked into a contract.
- I asked him how they come up with their phone prices and he said, “I don’t know, the owner has an algorithm that he uses but I don’t know what it is.”
- I asked if I could take a picture of his display and he said yes, but to please not post it anywhere.

Location 5 – T Mobile 5th and South, Philadelphia
Notes:
- I thought that it would be interesting to visit some of the more legitimate cell phone stores that I walked past since I wanted to know if their business is being affected by all of the used stores around. I spoke to a girl working who said that she hasn’t noticed a decrease in sales. The people buying from T Mobile, in her opinion, fall into a lower income demographic anyways, but they would still rather buy the cheapest phone that T Mobile sells and have the option to add insurance or pay via a payment plan.
- One customer that she talked to had bought a Samsung on eBay; however it ended up being a cheap Chinese version that didn’t work. So, there may be a fear of buying phones online for this reason which is why sales for legit stores are not being affected.
Location 6 – CEX 4th and South Street, Philadelphia
Notes:
- Crowded, definitely had a lot more customers than all of the other stores that I had been to
- Sold phones, tablets, dvds, playstation, ebox, etc.
- Actually posed as more of a customer and less of a student doing research since I heard that these guys were “punks” and would probably not give me much time if they knew the real reason I was coming in.
- Had a huge collection of phones, ranging from $8.00 for an old flip phone to $860.00 for the newest iPhone
- One of the guys who I talked to said that all of these phones are used and unlocked; another guy was trying to get me to trade in my kindle for cash.

Location 7 – Verizon 3rd and South Street, Philadelphia
Notes:
- Spoke to a store manager who stated that he actually loves what the second hand market is doing for this particular store. Verizon will send customers to the second hand stores to buy cheap phones, and then when the customers are ready to upgrade they will come back to Verizon.
- He said that these second hand stores have a reputation for carrying a good amount of stolen product, and that while there is a small amount of paperwork needed to trade in an electronic, none of the questions asked within the paperwork are questions that matter. He said that even if a person is caught selling one of these stores a stolen good, that person can just arrange for a friend to drop off the next stolen good.
- From what he understands, products come from people trading in phones for cash which the store than turns around to sell for a profit.

Location 8 – Funkomatic 11th and Market, Philadelphia
Notes:
- I could not stop by or talk to any employees since the store was closed.
Location 9 – 12th and Chestnut  
Notes:  
- I thought that it was interesting to take note of more legitimate cell phone stores closing, potentially as a result of the underground market which appears to be booming in Philadelphia.

Location 10 – Stereo City, Inc. 13th and Chestnut, Philadelphia  
Notes:  
- Did not visit this storefront, but observed from the outside. I noticed several Asian customers stopping by.
Location 11 – BJ Variety 15th and Chestnut

Notes:
- Did not visit this storefront, but observed from the outside. There wasn’t much foot traffic.
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[Images of various iPhone models from different carriers]
Overall Observations:
- I walked river to river (from the Schuylkill to the Delaware) on Saturday and noted that 80% of the cell phone stores that I passed were second hand versus 20% legit stores. Additionally, from the conversations that I had with the people that I met, more and more trade-in stores are opening up while, I noted, stores like T Mobile are closing.
- In general, the employees that I talked to were very cautious of me and the fact that I was asking questions about their consumer base, pricing and products. Because of these reasons, I don’t think that I extracted great information for this project.
- There were a lot of repetitive answers which I can look to to make generalizations about the second hand market, but my impression so far is that I think that the internet may prove to be a better source of information gathering for this project.